

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BG, PK

SUBJECT: ANOTHER OPENING OF THE SAME SHOW: FEW SURPRISES
ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

SUMMARY: TO FORWARD THE SECOND REVOLUTION, PRESIDENT MUJIBUR RAHMAN TOLD A SIZEABLE BUT ESSENTIALLY UNENTHUSIASTIC CROWD AT SUHRAWARDY UDYAN ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, MARCH 26, THAT THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REVAMPED AND THAT COMPULSORY ALL-PURPOSE COOPERATIVES WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN ALL 65,000 VILLAGES OF THE COUNTRY. MUJIB ALSO STRESSED THAT THERE COULD BE NO FRIENDSHIP WITH PAKISTAN UNTIL BANGLADESH RECEIVED ITS LEGITIMATE SHARE OF ASSETS. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A 40-MINUTE SPEECH BEFORE SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE AT SHURAWARDY UDYAN MARCH 26 IN HONOR
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OF INDEPENDENCE DAY, PRESIDENT MUJIBUR RAHMAN

REVIWED THE DEPREDACTIONS OF THE PAKISTANI MILITARY IN 1971, EMPHASIZED THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO DATE IN REBUILDING THE COUNTRY, REITERATED THE FOUR MAJOR POINTS OF HIS SECOND REVOLUTION--ELIMINATION OF CORRUPTION, INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION, POPULATION CONTROL, AND NATIONAL UNITY--AND ANNOUNCED ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES FOR THE COUNTRY AND PLANS FOR COMPULSORY COOPERATIVES IN EVERY VILLAGE.

2. THE CONCEPT OF COMPULSORY COOPERATIVES WAS THE ONLY NEW POINT IN HIS SPEECH. ACCORDING TO MUJIB, IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS COMPULSORY MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVES WILL BE SET UP IN EACH OF THE NATION'S 65,000 VILLAGES. EVERY ABLE-BODIED MAN MUST WORK AND EVERY INCH OF LAND BE CULTIVATED. THE PEOPLE WOULD RETAIN OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LAND, BUT ALL WHO WORK, INCLUDING THE LANDLESS, WILL BE ENTITLED TO A SHARE OF THE PRODUCT, WITH A PORTION ALSO GOING TO THE GOVERNMENT. FERTILIZER, TEST RELIEF, AND WORKS PROGRAMS WOULD BE CHANNLED THROUGH THE COOPERATIVES. THE PRESENT UNION COUNCILS WILL GRADUALLY BE ELIMINATED.

3. THE CURRENT FOUR DIVISIONS AND 19 DISTRICTS OF BANGLADESH WILL BE ABOLISHED AND THE SUBDIVISIONS (ABOUT 54 OF THEM) ELEVATED TO DISTRICT STATUS. THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL OF EACH NEW DISTRICT WILL INCLUDE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE, BAKSAL MEMBERS, AND GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL. AT THE THANA (POLICE STATION) LEVEL, COUNCILS WILL INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM BAKSAL, PEASANTS, WORKERS, YOUTHS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES. SINCE MUJIB ALSO CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT BAKSAL WILL HAVE WOMEN, STUDENT, YOUTH, PEASANT AND LABOR FRONTS, PRESUMABLY THESE FRONTS WILL BE THE SOURCE OF SOME COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP. REMARKING ONCE MORE ON THE SLOWNESS OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE JUDICIARY WILL BE REORGANIZED TO ESTABLISH TRIBUNALS AT THE THANA LEVEL TO ENSURE QUICK JUSTICE. MUJIB SET NO TVDE FRAME FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL CHANGES.

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4. ON FOREIGN POLICY, THE PRESIDENT THANKED INDIA FOR ITS MILITARY HELP IN 1971, REAFFIRMED BDG'S NON-ALIGNED POLICY, AND COMPLAINED THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES BOUGHT BENGALIEE PRODUCTS CHEAP AND SOLD THEIR OWN GOODS DEAR. THE MAIN THRUST OF HIS COMMENTS WERE ON PAKISTAN, HOWEVER. ALTHOUGH HE WANTED FRIENDSHIP WITH PAKISTAN AND FELT NO ILL WILL TOWARD THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE, MUJIB SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FRIENDSHIP WITH PAKISTAN

UNTIL PAKISTAN GAVE US "OUR LEGITIMATE SHARE OF ASSETS."
MUJIB ALSO TOOK REPORTED REFERENCES BY BHUTTO TO
PRESENT CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH AS A SIGN OF
MEDDLING. HE ASKED BHUTTO "WHAT IS THE CONDITION
OF THE FRONTIER PATHANS...THE CONDITIONS OF THE
PEOPLE OF BALUCHISTAN YOU ARE KILLING BY AERIAL
BOMBING AND STRAFFING...THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE
OF SIND." MUJIB TOLD BHUTTO TO PUT HIS OWN HOUSE
IN ORDER, TO MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS.

5. COMMENT. INDEPENDENCE DAY DID NOT LIVE UP TO ITS
ADVANCE BILLING, NEITHER IN TERMS OF CROWD SIZE OR
ATTITUDE NOR OF MUJIB'S SPEECH. WHAT MOST STRUCK
OBSERVERS AT THE UDIYAN WAS THE TEPID RESPONSE OF THE
CROWD, ESTIMATED BY SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICIALS AT 100 -
150,000, FAR SHORT OF THE CLAIMED ONE MILLION. THE
CROWDS FAILED TO REACT EITHER TO CHEERLEADER TECHNIQUES
OR TO MUJIB'S REMARKS. THERE WAS LITTLE APPLAUSE
DURING THE SPEECH AND NO STANDING OVATIONS BEFORE OR
AFTERWARDS. MUJIB SPOKE ONLY BRIEFLY, FOR HIM, AND
MUCH OF THE FIRE OF HIS FAMILIAR ORATORY WAS
MISSING. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AT THE UDIYAN WERE
EXCELLENT BUT HAPPILY UNTESTED; THE DOCILITY OF THE
CROWD CALLED FOR LITTLE MORE THAN TRAFFIC CONTROL.

6. THE SPEECH ITSELF WAS LARGELY A REPETITION OF THE
PRESIDENT'S REMARKS TO THE PARLIAMENT ON JANUARY 25
WHEN HE INSTITUTED THE NEW SYSTEM. HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF
POLITICAL FRONTS, ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES, AND
JUDICIAL REFORM HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED FOR SOME WEEKS.
AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, NO HINT WAS GIVEN AS REGARDS
THE FUTURE COMPOSITION OF A BAKSAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
THE FIVE-YEAR TIME SPAN FOR EFFECTING THE "COMPULSORY
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COOPERATIVES" SCHEME DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN URGENT
PLAN OF ACTION. IN SUM, THE SPEECH PROVIDED NO NEW
SOLACE TO BENGALIS, NO IMMEDIATE RELIEF FOR THEIR
TROUBLES.
CHESLAW

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